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14. ABSTRACT

The Department of Defense (DOD) has a long history of supplying Homeland Humanitarian Assistance (HHA) in support of over-tasked state and local agencies. Hurricanes Andrew and Katrina highlighted the limitations of the current ad-hoc based approach to dealing with these disasters in the United States. Measures are required to improve speed of response and unity of effort and better prepare the Military to respond to anticipated future catastrophes. This paper provides a brief history of the regulations and participation in HHA by the military. Possible improvements examined include, training a core staff at NORTHCOM to support the mission, pre-designating and training a "seasonal" Joint Task Force (JTF) commander and staff for HHA, the establishment of a standing JTF-HHA, or the establishment of a standing Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) for HHA.

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IMPROVING THE U.S. MILITARY'S RESPONSE TO HOMELAND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE OPERATIONS

by

Joseph R. O'Brien Lieutenant Commander, USN

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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Abstract

IMPROVING THE U.S. MILITARY'S RESPONSE TO HOMELAND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE OPERATIONS

The Department of Defense (DOD) has a long history of supplying Homeland Humanitarian Assistance (HHA) in support of over-tasked state and local agencies. Hurricanes Andrew and Katrina highlighted the limitations of the current ad-hoc based approach to dealing with these disasters in the United States. Measures are required to improve speed of response and unity of effort and better prepare the Military to respond to anticipated future catastrophes. This paper provides a brief history of the regulations and participation in HHA by the military. Possible improvements examined include, training a core staff at NORTHCOM to support the mission, predesignating and training a "seasonal" Joint Task Force (JTF) commander and staff for HHA, the establishment of a standing JTF-HHA, or the establishment of a standing Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) for HHA.

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Introduction

The Hurricane season of 2005 brought the U.S. Military's role in coordinated federal humanitarian assistance response to the forefront of public view and opinion. The military currently assembles a mix of available assets, under the command structure of a Joint Task Force (JTF), post crisis.1 This method has the potential to result in the perception of a slow response, despite the military's possession of significant assets and substantial operational level command and control. Complicating this ad-hoc arrangement is the requirement for Department of Defense (DOD) assets to coordinate their efforts with state-controlled National Guard units and various other governmental and non-governmental agencies beyond the scope of normal Joint operations. Additionally, the supporting role to state and local authorities places unique demands on the DOD response. can be done to better prepare the JTF Commander for a humanitarian assistance role in the inevitable next disaster? Directed training, a dedicated "seasonal" JTF, a "standing" JTF, or the establishment of a Joint Inter-Agency Task Force

¹ Gregory A. Hermsmeyer, "Organizing for Disaster: Improving U.S. Foreign Humanitarian Assistance Operations" (Unpublished JMO paper, Naval War College, 2002), 2.

(JIATF) may offer the benefits of improved speed of response, economy of DOD forces, and a better focused unity of effort.²

Demand Based Response

Federal, and more specifically DOD, response to homeland humanitarian emergencies is in its simplest terms demand based. This system is based in the limited powers granted to the Federal government by the Constitution of the United States. The founding fathers' concern with maintaining State's rights placed responsibility for disaster response within the State governments' purview. Consequently, while the military has always had a role in disaster relief/humanitarian assistance, its role is in response to civilian requests and subject to civilian control. The Civil Defense Act of 1950 and the Federal Disaster Act of 1950 both reinforced the supporting role of Federal forces to State and local response, but neither focused on providing timely post disaster response. Attempts to fix this shortfall in the 1970s, including the establishment of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), improved Federal oversight but failed to address improving DOD response. The Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1988 (Public Law 93-288, as amended by Public Law 100-707), commonly

⁴ Ibid., 5.

² Ibid.

³ Karl F. Schneider, *Disaster Relief-Is it spelled F-E-M-A*? (Arlington, VA: Defense Technical Information Center, 1993), 4.

referred to as "The Stafford Act", established the framework for the "Federal Government to provide assistance to U.S. States, territories, and possessions to alleviate suffering and mitigate damage resulting from major disasters and civil emergencies." This guidance codified procedures for both requesting and providing DOD response to local governments. Further clarification of the DOD's role in Federal humanitarian assistance response was provided in the Federal Response Plan (FRP) of 1992. This overall incremental progression of legislation resulted in a system where local emergency organizations provide response until they are overwhelmed at which time the Governor can bring the assets of the State, including the National Guard acting in a Title 32 status. 6 If the disaster exceeds the states ability to cope with the crisis, the Governor may request Federal assistance from the President. The Stafford Act then provides the President the ability to declare a state of emergency, allowing active duty soldiers to be employed to the crisis under the direction of FEMA.8

⁵ David L. Grange and Rodney L. Johnson, "Forgotten Mission: Military Support to the Nation," Joint Force Quarterly, (Spring 1997): 109.

⁶ James A. Fraley Jr., The Army Reserve Role in Military Support to Civil Authorities: A New Approach for the 21st Century. (Arlington, VA: Defense Technical Information Center, 1998), 4-5.

⁸ Thomas R. Lujan, Legal Aspects of Domestic Employment of the Army, (Arlington, VA: Defense Technical Information Center, 1996), 3.

A History of DOD Homeland Humanitarian Assistance

The United States' military has a long history of augmenting local authorities in providing humanitarian assistance to their citizens. The roots of this type of response lie in early militias' integration into all aspects of the community. It was during the final year of the Civil War when Army Officers provided disaster assistance through the Freedman's Bureau that the Federal government began to play an integral role. This type of assistance continued through the nineteenth century with the government responding to all sorts of natural disasters including fires, floods, earthquakes, and hurricanes.

This tradition of providing assistance is destined to continue. The National Security Strategy mandates the military to adapt in order to better address catastrophic challenges including natural disasters that are capable of producing WMD-like effects. This direction guarantees the military's supporting role to States' disaster relief efforts will continue for the foreseeable future. While there are numerous examples of the military providing homeland humanitarian assistance, this paper will analyze the response

⁹ United States Marine Corps, *Domestic Support Operations* MCWP 3-33.4 (Washington D.C.: 1 July 1993), 1-2.

¹⁰ The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington D.C. March 2006), 44.

from two years in recent history to evaluate areas for improvement.

1992, A Decisive Point in Homeland Humanitarian Assistance

During a three-week period in 1992, Hurricane Andrew, Hurricane Iniki and Typhoon Omar struck various regions of the United States, each causing enormous amounts of damage. In order to accommodate FEMA requests for assistance, DOD deployed JTFs to coordinate the military response to each crisis providing more than 28,000 soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen, and DOD civilians to the disaster relief efforts. 11 Dealing with the catastrophic disaster wrought by Andrew, FEMA officials waited for assistance requests from local and state officials who were so overwhelmed the didn't know the full extent of what they needed. 12 This resulted in a delay in the arrival of DOD assets leading to the infamous statement "Where the hell is the Calvary on this one?" by Dade County's Director of Emergency Management. 13 Despite the public outcry, lessons-learned from the disasters of 1992 focused mainly on improvements required to improve FEMA response. A GAO study

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Director of Military Support, Hurricane Andrew, Typhoon Omar, Hurricane Iniki After-Action Report, Report to the Secretary of the Army, The Department of Defense Executive Agent (Washington, D.C.: February 1993), 4.

¹² General Accounting Office, Disaster Assistance: Federal, State, and Local Response to Natural Disasters Need Improvement, Report to Congressional Requestors (Washington D.C.: 1991), 8-10.
13 Bill Adair, "Ten years ago, her angry plea got hurricane aid moving",

St. Petersburg Times, 20 August 2002, available from http://www.sptimes.com/2002/webspecials02/andrew/day3/story1.shtml; Internet, accessed 05 April 2006.

conducted primarily to examine DOD's response lauded the department's efforts and only suggested minor recommendations for improvements. Another independent analysis of the DOD response, conducted by the Director of Military Support (DOMS), noted that the military response required clarification of key players' responsibilities and better education for military leaders in the federal disaster response system. In both cases, while the DOD response was viewed as appropriate, it was noted that speed of deployment and "unity of command" were areas for improvement.

Post Hurricane Andrew Changes

Following the events of 1992, procedural, doctrinal, and force structure changes were made to further refine federal response, including the military's role in humanitarian relief. The DOD updated directives 3025.1, Military Support to Civil Authorities (MSCA), and 3025.15, Military Assistance to Civil Authorities, which consolidated policies regarding military involvement in disaster, related civil emergencies, and attacks within the United States, its territories, and

¹⁴ Terry R. Youngbluth, A Post-Hurricane Andrew Review of Trends in Department of Defense Disaster Relief Operations (Arlington, VA: Defense Technical Information Center, 1996), 5.

Director of Military Support, Hurricane Andrew, Typhoon Omar, Hurricane Iniki After-Action Report, Report to the Secretary of the Army, The Department of Defense Executive Agent (Washington, D.C.: February 1993), i-ii.

possessions. Additionally, the military worked to fill a doctrinal void present in their conduct of the humanitarian assistance mission. A key publication created was FMFM 7-10, Domestic Support Operations, originally an Army publication that was adopted for use by the Marine Corps. Chapter five of this manual specifically addresses disasters and domestic emergencies, outlining the responsibilities of all federal players. Additionally, Joint Publication 3-07, "Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War", Joint Pub 3-07.3 "Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Peace Operations", and Joint Pub 3-26 "Homeland Security" were all created to address the multiple aspects of the military's role in homeland humanitarian assistance operations.

Additionally, following the attack on 9-11, the Federal Response Plan (FRP) was updated, revised, and renamed the National Response Plan (NRP). This document outlines a concept of systematic, coordinated, and proactive deployment of Federal resources. It also re-emphasizes the concept of handling incidents at the lowest possible level while stressing the significant role that DOD assets could play in an incident of National Significance. The NRP lays out

¹⁶ Department of Defense, *Military Support to Civil Authorities (MSCA)*, DOD Directive 3025.1. (Washington D.C.: 1993), 1-2.

¹⁷ United States Marine Corps, *Domestic Support Operations* MCWP 3-33.4 (Washington D.C.: 1 July 1993)

 $^{^{18}}$ Department of Homeland Security, National Response Plan, (Washington D.C.: 2004), 5.

organizational structures and procedures for providing response, specifically addressing procedures for requesting DOD support of Civil Authorities. The document also recognizes the likelihood that a catastrophic event could quickly overwhelm local capabilities and demands a proactive Federal response. The procedures for the response are located in the NRP Incident Supplement. This major rewrite was designed to provide operators a single source document for dealing with national emergencies including natural disasters.

Changes in the Federal force structure, designed to improve domestic response to emergencies of all types, were also undertaken. These included the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security that realigned a confusing patchwork of government activities into a single department with the primary mission of protecting our homeland. A key activity under the purview of this new department was FEMA, which retained its disaster relief role. The military also underwent restructuring to provide better response in defense of the homeland. This transformation included the creation of U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), established Oct. 1, 2002

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¹⁹ Ibid., 43.

President George W Bush, *Department of Homeland Security*, (Washington D.C.: June 2002), 1-2. available from

to provide command and control of DOD homeland defense efforts and to coordinate military assistance to civil authorities. 21

2005, History Repeats Itself

Late August 2005, the first of three catastrophic Hurricanes struck mainland United States. Similar to the events 12 years prior, DOD mobilized to support all three standing up JTFs for each. Like 1992's Hurricane Andrew, Hurricane Katrina overwhelmed local and State authorities driving belated requests for government assistance. initial magnitude of the situation was not realized, the DOD mobilized over 17,417 active duty personnel in support of NORTHCOM created JTF Katrina. 22 Despite the significant advances in doctrine, structure, and a common playbook resident in the post-Andrew National Response Plan, confusion and "the fog of war" again had significant impact on a coordinated response. Federal response, including that of the DOD, bore the brunt of public criticism mainly due to the perception of a slow deployment speed. Perhaps the most vocal of these was New Orleans' Mayor Nagin who bluntly stated: "Don't tell me 40,000 people are coming here. They're not

http://www.dhs.gov/interweb/assetlibrary/book.pdf; Accessed 10 April 2006.

21 "U.S. Northern Command" 6 April 2006, available from

http://www.northcom.mil/about_us/about_us.htm; Internet; accessed 15 April
2006.

²² U.S. Northern Command Press Release, September 5th, 2005. available from http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1478165/posts; Internet; accessed 14 May 2006.

here. It's too doggone late. Now get off your asses and do something, and let's fix the biggest goddamn crisis in the history of this country". 23

Post-crisis analysis of the response to Hurricane Katrina yielded a report entitled "The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina Lessons Learned" which examined all aspects of the Federal response including that of the DOD. In analyzing the lessons learned this report provided three areas for military improvement and recommendations on how to achieve them. These included:

- Improve the unity of effort between National Guard and Active Duty Forces
- Streamline the process for requesting forces in the current "pull" structure
- Improve communications between DHS, FEMA, NG, State, and Local authorities. 24

The U.S. House of Representative's, Select Bipartisan

Committee to Investigate the Preparation for and Response to

Hurricane Katrina was less cordial with regards to the DOD

response. This committee identified numerous areas for

improvement which included:

 National Guard and DOD response operations, though comprehensive, were perceived as slow

²³ "Mayor to Feds: "Get off your asses" Transcript of Interview with New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin", CNN, 2 September 2005, available from http://www.cnn.com/2005/US/09/02/nagin.transcript/; Internet; accessed 20 April 2006.

Office of the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, *The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina Lessons Learned* (Washington D.C.: 2006), 54-55.

- DOD lacked situational awareness of post-landfall conditions, which contributed to a slower response
- The lack of integration of National Guard and active duty forces hampered the military response
- Northern Command does not have adequate insight into state response capabilities or adequate interface with governors, which contributed to a lack of mutual understanding and trust during the Katrina response
- DOD, FEMA and the State of Louisiana had difficulty coordinating with each other, which slowed the response
- DOD/DHS coordination was not effective during Hurricane Katrina
- Joint Task Force Katrina command staff lacked joint training, which contributed to the lack of coordination between active duty components
- The Department of Defense has not yet incorporated or implemented lessons learned from joint exercises in military assistance to civil authorities that would have allowed for a more effective response to Katrina²⁵

Both post Andrew and Katrina analysis of the DOD response can be broken down into two major areas for improvement speed of mobility, and unity of effort. Enablers for these areas include improved training in interagency coordination and communication framework that facilitates unity of effort.

Analysis

The DOD will continue to provide a supporting role in homeland humanitarian assistance (HHA) for the foreseeable feature. To ensure the American people receive the best possible response, improvements are required to increase the speed of mobility and optimize the military's role in

²⁵ Select Bipartisan Committee to Investigate the Preparation for and Response to Hurricane Katrina, A Failure of Initiative, The Final Report of the Select Bipartisan Committee to Investigate the Preparation for and Response to Hurricane Katrina, (Washington D.C.: 2006), 201-230.

achieving interagency unity of effort. Options to improve the process vary in simplicity and cost. They include training a core group at NORTHCOM to respond to cases of HHA, the designation of a "seasonal" JTF to cover military support to HHA through the hurricane season, the establishment of a standing JTF Disaster relief, or even the establishment of a Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) specifically tasked with dealing with HHA operations. These options are examined below.

Train a Core Group of NORTHCOM Responders

With little overhead this is the most cost conscious system to improve response. Training selected members of NORTHCOM to augment a "JTF-Hurricane" staff would assist in coordinating the DOD response with other government agencies in the event of a humanitarian crisis. One could argue that this system already exists and is currently employed.

Supporters of this line of thinking would assert that the Standing Joint Task Force Headquarters - North (SJFHQ-N) whose mission is to "maintain situational awareness of the U.S.

Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR) in order to enable rapid transition to a contingency response posture" already fills this role. Designed to rapidly deploy

[&]quot;Standing Joint Force Headquarters North", 6 April 2006, available from http://www.northcom.mil/about_us/SJFHQN.htm; Internet; accessed 15 April 2006.

as a joint command and control element to support civil support operations, 27 this element and components of JTF-CS were integrated into the command structure of JTF Katrina. 28 Advocates that this approach is effective and already implemented point to the successful employment of the 5th Army led JTF-Rita.

The military response to Hurricane Rita was prompt and unified under the same structure as that employed during Hurricane Katrina. An aggressive and forward leaning DOD approach, coupled with a weaker storm highlighted the military's ability to bring significant mass to bear with an impressive speed of deployment. While JTF RITA was successful it could be argued that the military overstepped their supporting role in the arena of homeland humanitarian assistance, a fact that would be challenged during the DOD's response to Hurricane Wilma.

Hurricane Wilma highlighted the risk of approaching every potential disaster with an aggressive military response.

Continuing their forward leaning posture, NORTHCOM contacted the Florida National Guard (FNG) to coordinate the

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²⁸ "TF All American, A Joint and Interagency Team", September 2006, available from http://www.amc.army.mil/ausa/Cerrone.ppt#292,5,Task Force Katrina; Internet; Accessed 14 May 2006; Slide 5.

establishment of JTF Wilma on 18 October. 29 This action was met with significant resistance from the well-prepared Florida Division of Emergency Management Chief, Mr. Fugate who stressed the importance of dealing with the situation at the lowest possible level in accordance with all the governing directives. Florida's perception of the move to establish a JTF was that the federal government was trying to establish unity of command for the response under the Federal government by using the National Incident Management System (NIMS) principle of one incident, one commander to seize control of the situation from local authorities. 30 Locals saw this as an affront to the concept of handling the situation at the lowest possible level and an infringement on the rights legally laid out in the Stafford Act and other governing directives. NORTHCOM's attempt to stand up a JTF augmented by their SJFHQ while attempting to minimize speed of deployment failed to adequately address the issue of unity of effort, leaving room for further improvement.

Designate a "Seasonal" JTF

The designation of a "Seasonal" JTF would improve upon the current system of ad-hoc JTF creation. During the 2005 hurricane season the $1^{\rm st}$ Army was tasked with supporting JTF

²⁹ Robert Block, "Florida Beat Back Washington During Hurricane Wilma: A Video-Conference Coup Mr. Fugate Seizes 300 Phones", Wall Street Journal, 8 December 2005, Al.

³⁰ Ibid.

Katrina while 5th Army was responsible for Hurricanes Rita and Wilma. Pre-designating the commander responsible for homeland humanitarian response would enable staff and unit training to be conducted resulting in increased speed of deployment, improved unity of effort, and an accompanying economy of force. The early identification of a JTF commander would also provide for improved coordination with state and local authorities. This construct could still reap the benefit of NORTHCOM's SJFHQ while leveraging the advantage of the current force disposition that maintains non-deployed surge capability with minimal increase in overhead.

Establish a Standing JTF

The concept of a standing JTF is not without precedent.

NORTHCOM currently maintains three standing JTFs. These include JTF-AK responsible for "coordinating the land defense of Alaska as well as military assistance to its civil authorities", 31 JTF-North, formerly known as JTF Six, responsible for coordinating military-unique support to law enforcement agencies and interagency synchronization to deter and prevent transnational threats to the homeland, 32 and JTF-CS which plans and integrates DOD support to the designated

^{31 &}quot;Joint Task Force Alaska", 5 April 2006, available from http://www.northcom.mil/about_us/JTF_Alaska.htm; Internet; accessed 15 April 2006.

[&]quot;Joint Task Force North", 6 April 2006, available from http://www.northcom.mil/about_us/JTF_North.htm; Internet; accessed 15 April 2006.

Primary Agency (PA) for domestic chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or high-yield explosive (CBRNE) consequence management operations. 33 The creation of a JTF-HHA would facilitate experts in dealing with humanitarian emergencies while providing a framework for interagency coordination. This construct would ensure standardized training, provide a core group of humanitarian relief experts, and allow for the refinement of tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) for handling these contingencies.

The cost associated with the creation of a standing JTF that would have to be evaluated against the increased speed of response and unity of effort afforded. However, the feasibility of expanding JTF-CS mission to include the humanitarian assistance mission should be examined. similarities between their current mission and the role that would be conducted by the proposed JTF-HHA are striking. fact the four principles of JTF-CS are very similar to those that would be required by the proposed JTF-HHA:

- DOD consequence management support and assistance to civil authorities will emphasize typical DOD roles, skills and capabilities, including the ability to mobilize large numbers of people, move large amounts of material and equipment and provide logistical support.
- DOD does not assume control of the response effort. Military forces always remain subordinate to civilian

^{33 &}quot;Joint Task Force Civil Support", 6 April 2006, available from http://www.northcom.mil/about_us/JTF_CS.htm; Internet; accessed 15 April 2006.

- control and oversight, in accordance with Article II, Section 2 of the United States Constitution.
- JTF-CS works in support of the Lead Federal Agency (LFA) managing the consequences of a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or high-yield explosive (CBRNE) situation in the United States or its territories and possessions. JTF-CS acts upon approved requests for assistance and mission assignments received by DOD
- JTF-CS operates within a clear Department of Defense (DOD) chain of command. The JTF-CS Commander reports to the Commander of U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), who in turn reports to the Secretary of Defense and the President.³⁴

Leveraging the contacts and relationships already developed within JTF-CS to the humanitarian relief mission may provide a cost conscious alternative to the creation of a new command while achieving facilitating the desired improvements.

Establish a Joint Inter-Agency Task Force for Homeland Humanitarian Assistance (JIATF-HHA):

The issue of homeland humanitarian assistance goes well beyond just the military's role. The creation of a JIATF-HHA led by the DHS would provide the framework for a coordinated and centralized federal response to include Department of Defense assets. ³⁵ Close coordination between DHS civilian disaster experts and a Joint Force Headquarters Element including a senior commander and staff would facilitate unity of effort in the evaluation of a humanitarian disaster and a closely coordinated response. Joint forces would remain under

[&]quot;Joint Task Force Civil Support Core Principles", 4 April 2006,
available from http://www.jtfcs.northcom.mil/pages/coreprinciples.html;
Internet; accessed 15 April 2006.

³⁵ Hermsmeyer, 18.

the command of NORTHCOM while receiving direction from the JIATF commander. This construct would provide a unified central point of interaction with state and local officials.

While offering an ideal framework to ensure unity of effort between government agencies in dealing with a humanitarian disaster, this construct is the most costly and controversial of those proposed. Current legislation and doctrine does not support this construct and would have to be revised accordingly. The buy-in required by multiple agencies as well as the creation of a staff purely designed to coordinate the military's response to homeland humanitarian disasters might not be the most efficient use of available assets.

Conclusions/Recommendations

As a valuable and capable asset of the taxpaying public, the Department of Defense will continue to play a role in homeland humanitarian relief operations. The need to properly support state and local governments in disaster relief requires a shift from the approach of using ad-hoc JTFs to deal with the operational inevitability of another natural disaster that overwhelms initial responders. Pre-designating and training the NORTHCOM SJFQ and JTF-Hurricane staffs for improved disaster response is a simple and relatively

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³⁶ Thid.

inexpensive step that could be easily implemented.

Designating JTFs to deal with these contingencies enables coordination with local and state responders through the use of liaison officers prior to a crisis, a step that has already been initiated. 37 While, this two-pronged effort will increase the speed of operational response by providing a core staff that is familiar with the complexities of the National Response System while providing a staff versed in the coordination required with the myriad of other government agencies involved in the response effort, providing an improved unity of effort, it is a short term solution at best. A longer-term solution should be to include the responsibility of Homeland Humanitarian Assistance into the current construct of JTF-CS. This solution would provide a standing core staff versed in the complexities of interagency coordination and structured to enable the military to quickly respond to any homeland crisis.

³⁷ Lolita C. Baldor, "Military Shores up Hurricane Response", Los Angeles Times, 6 May 2006, available from

http://www.latimes.co/news/nationworld/nation/wire/sns-ap-military-hurricanes,1,5899884.story?coll+sns-ap-nation-

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